

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

WALTER M. DICKIE, M.D., Director

Weekly



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GUY P. JONES
EDITOR

Children Victims in Home Accidents

Almost everyone is familiar with the statement that "accidents do not happen—they are caused." This would seem to apply particularly to accidents that occur commonly to young children in the home. In order to prevent such accidents continual safeguards must be provided.

In very young children suffocation is a common cause of accidental death. Many such cases occur when an infant is sleeping in bed with the mother or an older child. In changing position while asleep the older person's body may accidentally contact the infant's head in such a way that the breath is shut off. That is one of the most important reasons why young children should always sleep alone. Sometimes, too, the bedclothes become tangled in such a way that the infant's mouth and nose are sealed, shutting off the supply of air. Bedding should be warm but light weight and it should be tucked in smoothly so as to give no opportunity for the face to be covered. Sometimes it may be necessary to use safety pins in order to hold the covers firmly.

Falls are often most injurious to infants and even more so to toddlers and older children. It is important that every safeguard be provided lest an infant fall out of bed. Cribs with high sides should be provided. There should be no spaces, however, in which there might be opportunity for any portion of the infant's body to become wedged.

Older children commonly fall down stairs and while playing running games, stumble and fall. Most of such accidents produce only bumps and bruises. The young bones are soft and do not break easily. Sometimes accidents occur in playgrounds where no supervision is provided. Falls from swings, horizontal bars and similar equipment are common accidents in children. Play in such places should always be under the supervision of a trained attendant.

Burns cause many deaths and disfigurements in children. Toddlers frequently tip kettles of boiling water from the stove covering themselves with the fiery liquid. Playing with matches causes loss of both life and property. To remove children from all fire risks requires eternal vigilance, but so much damage can be done by fire in so short a time that it becomes necessary to exercise great vigilance.

Accidental drowning is another important factor in the production of high death rates. Too many active children are permitted to take chances in the water. Every child should be taught to swim but he should not be permitted to gain overconfidence that would lead him to take unnecessary chances. Every child has limitations in strength, endurance, courage, will power and a host of other attributes. Until such time as he is perfectly capable of realizing such limitations he should not be permitted to take any undue risks while in the water. Too many children are drowned because of overconfidence in their own

ability to meet the natural hazards that go with this excellent sport.

Accidental poisonings constitute another leading cause of death in infants and young children. Too often children have access to common poisons that may be used about the home. Medicine cabinets should be out of reach and in every way inaccessible to children.

Automobile deaths and their prevention receive the careful study of experts but, as a whole, there is little change in the death rate for this cause. Fortunately, relatively few children are killed as passengers in automobile accidents, but a great many children are injured fatally by automobiles while playing in the streets. Parents should keep young children out of the streets at all times. The public schools are doing excellent work in teaching safety to children. Those of pre-school age are not receiving the benefits from such teaching. The parents are responsible for children of this age group and upon them rests the responsibility for providing every possible safeguard to exposing their young children to the automobile hazard.

HYGIENIC CLOTHES FOR CHILDREN

Selection of proper clothing for children is necessary in the promotion of health. The child's clothes should allow freedom to permit the natural growth of bones, muscles and tissues of the young body as well as to permit the free action of the organs of circulation and digestion. No tight bands, stiff collars nor hard inflexible materials should be used in clothing children. Both ready-made and home-made clothes may provide the necessary health-promoting attributes. The mother is a busy individual and if she can purchase proper clothing ready-made she will have more time available for the care of her children and will save the exertion of strength and skill in making such garments at home.

Underwear is specially important. It comes next to the skin and plays a vital part in keeping the body at even temperature at all times. Cotton fiber underwear is generally accepted as best for active children both summer and winter. It should be of soft and open weave, admitting a layer of air within its meshes, thus retaining warmth when the layer of outer garments is added. The open weave absorbs perspiration and oily moisture thrown off by the skin and allows the moisture to evaporate quickly so that the body does not become chilled. It is cheap and is more easily laundered. Linen or flax fiber is smooth and is the coolest in warm weather. Wool, wool and silk mixtures, and silk may be used, but they have some disadvantages.

It is as bad to dress a child too warmly in winter as it is to expose him to the discomfort of cold due to insufficient clothing. If too warmly clad, intense perspiration occurs and may help to produce a common cold. Strong, healthy children do not need to be dressed as warmly as do delicate children or those who may be recovering from illness. Babies, however, must be kept much warmer than older and active children. Mixtures of silk and wool or of cotton and wool are generally used. Thick hems and buttons should be avoided in the baby's underwear because the lumps and ridges make imprints in the tender flesh.

Nightgowns should be designed for comfort rather than for beauty. Soft, warm cotton-fleeced material or flannel is desirable. Collars should be avoided because they wrinkle easily and may cause discomfort. For out-of-door sleeping a sleeping bag is convenient. The hands and feet are protected and a hood sewed to the neck of the garment prevents cold drafts reaching the back of the neck.

Washable materials are ideal for children's rompers, aprons, dresses and suits. Materials made of cotton dyed in the yarn and color-set before weaving are desirable. Printed materials do not launder as well. Heavy material, like denim, is useful for koveralls because it stands hard usage. It is tightly woven, however, and does not permit circulation of air and is warm in hot weather.

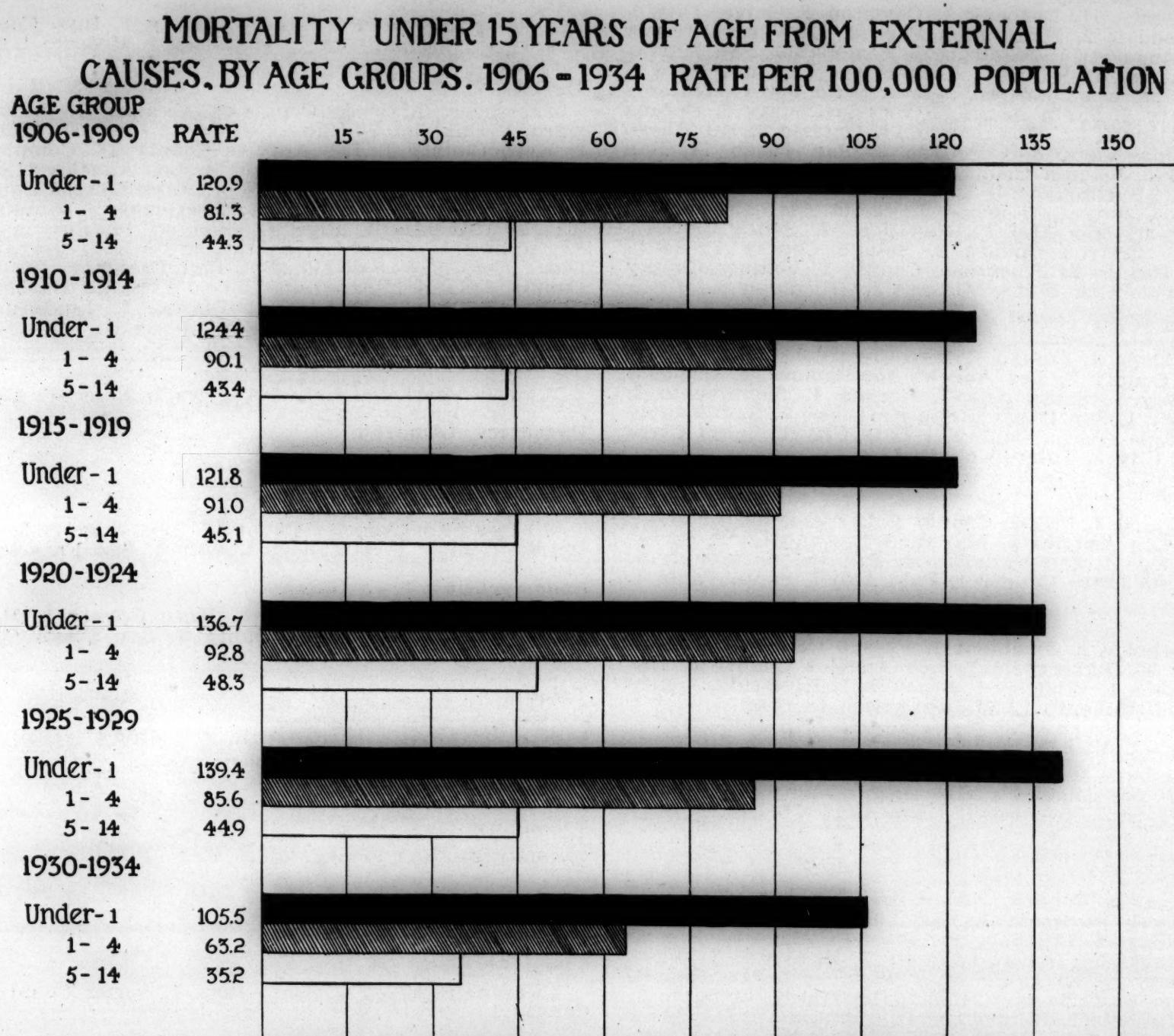
By selecting proper shoes in childhood much of the foot discomfort found in adults could be prevented. The human foot is a delicately adjusted piece of machinery. In childhood the twenty-six small bones which form its structure, the muscles, nerves, ligaments and blood vessels which promote its actions are soft, pliable and are easily thrown out of place if cramped in badly-shaped shoes.

Flat-foot or fallen arches, corns, bunions, enlarged joints and calloused places many times have their beginnings in wearing childhood shoes that failed to balance the weight of the body, as nature intended, upon the strong, bony, springy arch of the foot. It pays to select children's shoes with great care. As the child's foot develops and grows the height of the heel should be gradually increased so as to make use of the arch of the foot in supporting the weight of the body. The toes should never be crowded. There should be plenty of room for each toe but not too much room. The heel should fit snugly so as to prevent twisted and rundown heels. Careful attention to these details may prevent much discomfort as well as acute physical suffering in later years.

FEWER CHILDREN NOW DIE IN ACCIDENTS

Slight reductions in death rates for accidental causes among California children under 15 years of age have been recorded during recent years. Prior to 1930 there was a remarkable constancy in the mortality rates among these age groups. The term "external causes" includes automobile deaths, fatali-

ties from burns, drowning, falls, suffocation, poisoning and similar causes. It would seem that the various safety campaigns may be showing their effects. The safety instruction in the public schools is specially effective and offers reason to believe that the death rate from automobile accidents may eventually drop because of the effectiveness of this sort of instruction.



EXTERNAL CAUSES

NEW HEALTH OFFICERS

Dr. Arthur Hieronymus, health officer of Alameda, died early in December, after an illness of a month. Dr. Hieronymus had served as city health officer of Oakland and had also been director for California of surveys conducted by the United States Public Health Service. He had resumed his duties as city health officer of Alameda only a short time before his death. Dr. L. E. Skilling has been appointed to succeed Dr. Hieronymus in office.

Dr. A. J. Schwartz has been appointed city health officer of San Anselmo, to succeed Dr. Harry N. Hensler.

Better keep yourself clean and bright; you are the window through which you must see the world.

Our chief enemies at present are heart disease, cancer, pneumonia, tuberculosis and syphilis. If the full facts were known, as Dr. Osler said, syphilis would probably come first. Syphilis is the biggest killing disease in the community. It and tuberculosis are undoubtedly the greatest present contributors to the total mortality prior to the approach of old age. By the removal of tuberculosis and syphilis most of the preventable deaths from the age of 15 to 65 would be avoided.—Sir Arthur Newsholme, M.D.

Do not spend your days waiting for an angel to deliver realized hopes at your door. Go out and toil for them. There are few forms of hard work more wearying than waiting.

MORBIDITY

Complete Reports for Following Diseases for Week Ending December 12, 1936

Chickenpox

640 cases: Alameda County 17, Alameda 5, Berkeley 5, Oakland 22, Piedmont 1, Pleasanton 5, San Leandro 19, Calaveras County 1, Contra Costa County 6, Pittsburg 2, El Dorado County 1, Fresno 9, Sanger 1, Glenn County 13, Orland 4, Imperial 2, Inyo County 1, Kern County 11, Bakersfield 1, Los Angeles County 61, Burbank 1, Compton 1, Culver City 1, El Monte 2, Glendale 2, Huntington Park 3, La Verne 2, Long Beach 38, Los Angeles 50, Pasadena 7, Pomona 11, San Marino 11, South Pasadena 1, Whittier 1, Lynwood 1, South Gate 1, San Anselmo 1, Merced County 2, Monterey County 1, Monterey 1, Orange County 2, Santa Ana 2, Riverside County 8, Corona 4, Sacramento County 22, Sacramento 14, Ontario 9, San Diego County 15, Chula Vista 8, Coronado 2, San Diego 14, San Francisco 57, San Joaquin County 10, San Luis Obispo 1, San Mateo County 3, Burlingame 1, Daly City 17, Redwood City 4, Santa Barbara County 2, Lompoc 1, Santa Clara County 8, Mountain View 2, Palo Alto 14, San Jose 7, Santa Clara 3, Watsonville 18, Siskiyou County 2, Solano County 1, Santa Rosa 1, Tulare County 21, Tuolumne County 1, Ventura County 3, Fillmore 1, Yolo County 29, Winters 2, Woodland 6.

Diphtheria

53 cases: Oakland 4, Eureka 1, Inyo County 1, Kings County 1, Los Angeles County 3, Los Angeles 15, Pomona 1, Gardena 1, Orange County 5, Santa Ana 2, Corona 1, Sacramento 2, San Diego County 1, San Diego 3, San Francisco 5, San Joaquin County 1, San Luis Obispo County 1, Daly City 1, Santa Clara County 1, Yuba City 2, Tulare County 1.

German Measles

24 cases: Oakland 3, Fresno County 1, Los Angeles County 1, Long Beach 5, Los Angeles 4, Maywood 1, Anaheim 1, Sacramento 1, San Diego 1, San Francisco 1, San Joaquin County 1, Daly City 1, Santa Clara County 1, Palo Alto 1, Santa Paula 1.

Influenza

131 cases: Berkeley 1, Piedmont 1, Fresno County 1, Orland 1, Kern County 90, Bakersfield 1, Los Angeles County 6, Los Angeles 22, Pomona 1, Whittier 1, Roseville 1, Riverside County 2, Riverside 1, Sacramento 1, San Francisco 1.

Measles

15 cases: Pittsburg 1, Fresno County 2, Los Angeles County 1, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 3, San Diego County 1, El Cajon 1, San Diego 1, San Francisco 2, San Luis Obispo 1, Daly City 1.

Mumps

620 cases: Alameda County 1, Alameda 7, Berkeley 5, Livermore 2, Oakland 4, Piedmont 1, San Leandro 3, Oroville 17, Contra Costa County 1, Pittsburg 10, Fresno County 46, Fresno 5, Orland 9, Willows 14, Imperial County 3, El Centro 3, Imperial 1, Kern County 11, Kings County 3, Hanford 2, Los Angeles County 63, Alhambra 3, Beverly Hills 1, Burbank 3, Compton 3, Culver City 3, Glendale 1, Hermosa 3, Huntington Park 5, Long Beach 3, Los Angeles 46, Manhattan 1, Pasadena 24, Santa Monica 4, South Pasadena 14, Whittier 3, Lynwood 2, Hawthorne 12, South Gate 12, Bell 1, Gardena 1, Merced County 2, Los Banos 2, Monterey 1, Orange County 6, Orange 1, Santa Ana 17, Laguna Beach 2, Riverside County 28, Corona 1, Riverside 37, Sacramento County 1, Sacramento 13, San Bernardino 1, San Diego County 7, Coronado 6, National City 8, San Diego 23, San Francisco 51, San Joaquin County 13, Stockton 2, San Mateo County 1, Burlingame 1, Lompoc 2, Santa Barbara 3, Santa Clara County 1, Healdsburg 2, Ventura County 14, Fillmore 1, Santa Paula 12, Yolo County 1, Davis 1, Woodland 3.

Pneumonia (Lobar)

93 cases: Alameda County 1, Alameda 1, Berkeley 3, Oakland 1, Butte County 1, Martinez 1, Fresno County 6, Kern County 1, Los Angeles County 4, Arcadia 1, Azusa 1, El Monte 1, Glendale 1, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 36, Pasadena 2, Whittier 1, Hawthorne 1, Monterey Park 1, Mill Valley 1, Napa 1, Orange 1, Riverside 1, Sacramento County 1, Sacramento 3, San Bernardino 2, San Diego 2, San Francisco 8, San Luis Obispo County 1, Paso Robles 1, Santa Cruz County 2, Watsonville 1, Tehama County 2, Yolo County 1.

Scarlet Fever

302 cases: Alameda County 1, Alameda 1, Berkeley 5, Oakland 7, Butte County 4, Calaveras County 1, Williams 3, Contra Costa County 3, Walnut Creek 1, Placerville 1, Fresno County 9, Fresno 5, Kern County 6, Bakersfield 1, Lassen County 2, Los Angeles County 17, Glendale 1, Huntington Park 1, Long Beach 2, Los Angeles 39, Pasadena 1, Redondo 1, San Gabriel 1, Santa Monica 1, Whittier 2, Torrance 1, Hawthorne 1, Bell 2, Gardena 1, Madera County 1, San Anselmo 5, San Rafael 1, Mariposa County 2, Merced County 4, Carmel 1, Napa County 1, Calistoga 1, Napa 20, Orange County 2, Huntington

Beach 2, Santa Ana 2, Placer County 8, Auburn 9, Roseville 4, Riverside County 2, Sacramento County 5, Sacramento 12, North Sacramento 2, San Diego County 3, Chula Vista 1, National City 1, San Diego 6, San Francisco 24, San Joaquin County 4, Lodi 1, Stockton 1, Tracy 1, Paso Robles 4, Burlingame 2, San Mateo 1, San Carlos 1, Santa Clara County 8, San Jose 9, Santa Cruz County 5, Santa Cruz 1, Santa Rosa 1, Stanislaus County 3, Sutter County 1, Tehama County 3, Tulare County 3, Dinuba 1, Ventura County 5, Yolo County 1, Vallejo 6.

Smallpox

No cases reported.

Typhoid Fever

9 cases: Oakland 1, Fresno County 1, Inyo County 1, Lake County 1, National City 2, San Diego 1, Modesto 1, California 1.*

Whooping Cough

293 cases: Alameda County 2, Alameda 5, Berkeley 3, Hayward 3, Oakland 7, Butte County 2, Fresno County 9, Fresno 2, Kern County 7, Los Angeles County 18, Compton 5, Culver City 1, Hermosa 4, Long Beach 4, Los Angeles 71, Pasadena 3, Redondo 6, Santa Monica 7, Whittier 4, Merced County 2, Mono County 6, Pacific Grove 1, Orange County 5, Anaheim 4, Santa Ana 2, Placentia 1, Riverside County 17, Corona 6, Riverside 8, Sacramento County 7, Sacramento 5, San Bernardino 1, San Diego County 5, San Diego 9, San Francisco 26, San Joaquin County 3, Lodi 1, San Luis Obispo 1, Santa Barbara 11, Santa Clara County 2, Modesto 2, Dinuba 2, Lindsay 1, Ventura County 1, Woodland 1.

Meningitis (Epidemic)

3 cases: Berkeley 1, Los Angeles 1, Riverside County 1.

Dysentery (Amoebic)

3 cases: Riverside County.

Dysentery (Bacillary)

8 cases: Los Angeles County 1, Los Angeles 3, Pasadena 1, Orange County 1, San Diego County 1, San Francisco 1.

Poliomyelitis

13 Cases: Fresno County 1, Kern County 2, Bakersfield 1, Los Angeles 3, Monterey County 1, San Diego County 2, La Mesa 2, San Joaquin County 1.

Tetanus

One case: San Francisco.

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

One case: California.*

Trichinosis

One case: San Francisco.

Food Poisoning

One case: San Francisco.

Undulant Fever

4 cases: Berkeley 1, Santa Rosa 1, Sutter County 1, Ventura County 1.

Actinomycosis

One case: San Francisco.

Septic Sore Throat (Epidemic)

2 cases: Lake County.

Rabies (Animal)

20 cases: Los Angeles County 3, Alhambra 1, Long Beach 3, Los Angeles 5, Redondo 2, South Gate 2, Gardena 1, Santa Ana 1, San Bernardino 1, Visalia 1.

* Cases charged to "California" represent patients ill before entering the state or those who contracted their illness traveling about the state throughout the incubation period of the disease. These cases are not chargeable to any one locality.

Wisdom consists in knowing what to do. Skill consists in knowing how to do it. Virtue consists in doing.—David Starr Jordan.

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